

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO.132

Senator MacDonald offered the following resolution:

1       A resolution to condemn Governor Gretchen Whitmer's inaction  
2 in addressing issues at the Unemployment Insurance Agency with  
3 residents filing for and receiving unemployment benefits.

4       Whereas, The COVID-19 Pandemic has disrupted life for all  
5 Michigan residents. Since the virus reached the state in early  
6 March, tens of thousands of Michigan residents have been infected,  
7 and more than 6,000 have lost their lives. Governor Whitmer has  
8 taken dramatic action to mitigate the virus' spread, including  
9 closing schools and all nonessential businesses and ordering  
10 residents to stay home whenever possible; and

11       Whereas, Actions to address the COVID-19 Pandemic have led to  
12 a historic surge in unemployment claims. More than 2 million people  
13 were forced to file for benefits since the crisis began, bringing

1 the state's unemployment rate to 24 percent in April. Over this  
2 period, more than \$11.4 billion in unemployment benefits have been  
3 paid out; and

4       Whereas, The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) has failed to  
5 process claims in a timely manner, denying Michigan residents  
6 desperately needed income to pay bills and feed their families.  
7 More than 200,000 Michigan residents who have filed for benefits  
8 have not received a payment or have had their payments halted  
9 entirely; and

10       Whereas, The UIA has been unresponsive to the people they  
11 serve. Far too many people have been unable to address potential  
12 issues with their claims due to inaction or abysmal service by the  
13 UIA. Some residents have gone months without a response and have  
14 called and messaged the agency more than 1,000 times without being  
15 able to speak with a staff member; and

16       Whereas, The UIA has mismanaged potential fraud within the  
17 system, suspending benefits to deserving residents without  
18 forewarning or any regard for the impact on their lives. The UIA  
19 halted payments to 540,000 unemployment benefit accounts, without  
20 proper investigation, due to suspected fraud. More than half of  
21 these accounts have been cleared, an astounding error rate in  
22 identifying fraudulent activity. About 240,000 potentially innocent  
23 people are still waiting to see if their benefits will be approved  
24 or reinstated; and

25       Whereas, Governor Gretchen Whitmer and the UIA have failed to  
26 implement any meaningful changes to improve the situation. In any  
27 properly managed organization, a failure of this magnitude would  
28 have led to significant and timely changes in process, personnel,  
29 or both. Yet, the Governor has ignored legislators' calls for

1 leadership changes at UIA, and her efforts to address the situation  
2 have been wholly inadequate; and

3 Whereas, Governor Whitmer failed to address known issues at  
4 the UIA when she had the opportunity. Even before the coronavirus  
5 pandemic and the surge in claims, there was abundant evidence of  
6 problems at UIA. The Auditor General found that, across 2018 and  
7 2019, about 28 percent of callers hung up before they were able to  
8 speak with UIA staff. While action was taken to address this  
9 problem, it is clear that issues persist; and

10 Whereas, Governor Whitmer has demonstrated a lack of  
11 preparedness, a lack of responsiveness, and ultimately, a lack of  
12 leadership in addressing issues at the UIA. While quick to  
13 unilaterally declare and extend orders that have impacted the lives  
14 of every Michigander and their ability to earn a living, she has  
15 been unacceptably slow in ensuring the proper systems were in place  
16 to mitigate the adverse impacts of her actions. Governor Whitmer's  
17 ineffective leadership and poor decision-making have exacerbated  
18 the issues Michigan residents are facing during this deeply  
19 uncertain and difficult period. She has failed to meet the trust  
20 placed in her by the people of Michigan; now, therefore, be it

21 Resolved by the Senate, That we condemn Governor Gretchen  
22 Whitmer's inaction in addressing issues at the Unemployment  
23 Insurance Agency (UIA) with residents filing for and receiving  
24 unemployment benefits; and be it further

25 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the  
26 Governor, the Director of the Michigan Department of Labor and  
27 Economic Opportunity, and the Director of the Unemployment  
28 Insurance Agency.